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Tel Aviv shares hit record high
Page 9

Out of the closet and on the stage
Arts & Entertainment, Page 7

Turning on the heat
World of Sport

Index	
Arts & Entertainment	7
Business	8
Crossword	11
Movies/TV	11
Opinion	6
Sports	10

Israel said helping Mobutu's regime

By ABIEH O'SULLIVAN and news agencies

Israel is teaming up with China to train 13 commando brigades to defend Zaire's ailing regime from a spreading rebel war, according to reports from Zaire.

The Israelis are reportedly joining efforts to aid Zaire by its African allies of Morocco, Togo and Chad, who are sending troops. Egypt has offered to send military equipment for the infantry, said an unnamed senior Zairean Defense Ministry official.

According to the official, Israel and China will help train 13 rapid intervention commando brigades of 2,000 men each at bases near the fighting in upper Zaire.

A spokesman for Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai referred all queries on the matter to the IDF Spokesman, who said: "We do not deal with foreign relations."

Israel and Zaire have had strong military links in the past. In 1994, Israel approved a \$50 million deal to send arms and combat veterans to train and equip Zaire's army. At that time the military training was done through the private Israeli arms supplier Lavdan, led by retired brigadier Ze'ev Zacheria, some 40 recently released IDF soldiers went to Zaire to set up and train an elite presidential guard.

According to the reports from the central African republic, Zaire has already chartered planes to fly in the troops from Togo, Chad and Morocco.

But the official in Kinshasa said he could not give a date for the arrival of the troops. Moreover, the country has launched a sweeping recruitment campaign to beef up the government army.

The reports came as the Zairean army appeared to be crumbling in battles with Tutsi-led rebels as they marched toward the mineral-rich Shaba province. The key cities of Kalemie and Watsa have fallen to the rebels. Only in one area have government troops man-

Continued on Page 2



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his wife, Sara, meet with Pope John Paul II at the Vatican yesterday. (Reuters)

US official says Israel should stay in Lebanon

By STEVE RODAN

The Clinton administration does not support a unilateral Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon, a US official said yesterday.

In what appeared to be an endorsement of Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai's policy, the official said, an IDF withdrawal from Lebanon would leave a vacuum in the area that would probably be filled by anti-Israeli guerrillas. That would be at odds with the US policy of preventing the current tension in south Lebanon from escalating into a major confrontation.

"A unilateral withdrawal seems to us to be problematic," the official said. "There has to be somebody who has to be responsible for security. If there's a withdrawal and Katyusha rockets fall and Israel goes back into south Lebanon

Plans for Lebanon, Page 12

again, then what have you achieved?"

A unilateral IDF withdrawal from Lebanon, the official said, would also play into Syrian hands. "They'd be quite happy for Israel to pull out without anything being negotiated," he said.

He said an Israeli withdrawal must be part of an arrangement that includes Lebanon and Syria. He said that starting next week, the Clinton administration will begin efforts to restart the stalled talks between Jerusalem and Damascus.

But he expressed doubt over another element

of Mordechai's policy in south Lebanon: that which would have Israel, Syria, and Lebanon first discuss security arrangements in the south that would lead to an IDF pullout.

Damascus's objection, the official said, is that an agreement on south Lebanon would resolve what is currently Israel's biggest security headache without meeting its demand for a full withdrawal from Golan Heights.

"If it [Lebanon First] works, we'd support it," the US official said. "But we don't see it happening in terms of Syrian acceptance. It's important to be realistic on how this is to be achieved."

The official confirmed reports that since April 1996, after Operation Grapes of Wrath, Hizbullah has received 30 plane-loads of military equipment from Iran. They arrived in Lebanon via Damascus.

Pope wants to visit before 2000

By Jerusalem Post Staff and news agencies

Pope John Paul II expressed interest in visiting the Holy Land before the millennium, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu insisted after a 20-minute private audience in the pontiff's Vatican study.

The Vatican issued no statement regarding whether the pope would accept the invitation. Last year, the pope accepted an invitation from Palestinian Authority leader Yasser Arafat to visit Jesus's birthplace in Bethlehem at the turn of the millennium.

"I invited him to visit in the year 2000 due to the importance of the date of Jesus's birth to Christianity," Netanyahu told reporters after meeting the pope. "He said he wanted to come before that time. We said we will, of course, deal with the details. We did not deal with a date."

"We look forward to receiving you in Jerusalem," Netanyahu said as he left the private audience.

The pope responded: "God Bless Israel." Netanyahu later said that he read into the pontiff's willingness to visit and the salutation as signs of the pope's "love of Israel."

A Vatican statement confirmed that Netanyahu had invited the pope "to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land as soon as possible."

Netanyahu repeated an open invitation last made to the pope in 1994 by prime minister Yitzhak Rabin.

A trip to the Holy Land, one of the 76-year-old pope's cherished dreams, would be the first since Paul VI visited in 1964.

A senior diplomatic source said Netanyahu, meeting the pope for the first time, brought up the subject of how Islamic fundamentalism threatens Middle East peace efforts. "He told the pope: 'It's not rational, not in its cause, not in its oath,'" the source said.

The pope has condemned Islamic fundamentalist violence, most recently in Algeria, but also in the Middle East.

A Vatican statement said the pope

Israel-vatican relations, Page 3

told Netanyahu he hopes the Holy Land could be a place where "Jews, Christians, Moslems, Israelis and Arabs, believers and non-believers can create and consolidate a concrete peace in respect of everyone's rights and dignity."

The Vatican statement described the talks as cordial and said Netanyahu had briefed the pope on the status of the peace process.

The statement said Netanyahu promised the pope "to move ahead along the same path" as his predecessors towards reaching an agreement on the legal status of the Catholic Church in the land where Jesus lived and died.

The Vatican statement did not say whether the two had discussed the divisive issue of the status of Jerusalem. The Vatican wants international guarantees protecting Jerusalem as sacred to Christians, Moslems, and Jews. Netanyahu said before the meeting that no authority has done more to assure freer access to holy sites than Israel.

The pope, who has suffered a string of health problems over the last few years, appeared in good form during the picture-taking session and an exchange of gifts. He joked and chatted easily with Netanyahu, his wife Sara, and their delegation.

The pope also teased Sara Netanyahu, saying: "You look like a Polish girl" - a reference to his homeland - and she said, "I am."

The meeting was shorter than originally planned due to inclement weather in Switzerland, where Netanyahu was attending an international business conference.

Netanyahu held talks later in the day with Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi and Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini. He returns to Israel today.

Kahalani: 'Bar-On-for-Hebron' probe to close in two weeks

By LIAT COLLINS and RAINE MARCUS

Police Inspector-General Assaf Hefetz expects the investigation into the "Bar-On-for-Hebron" affair to be completed within about two weeks, Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani told the Knesset Interior Committee yesterday.

Kahalani denied interfering with the investigation, saying he is only being informed of who is being questioned. He also denied reports that police are responsible for the leaks from the investigation.

The committee was supposedly discussing police handling of the investigation in Jerusalem, but most of the investigation and in particular the statement by Prime Minister's Office Director-General Avigdor Lieberman that the police are being used as a political tool. Opposition MKs called for his resignation.

Kahalani gave full backing to the police and said they are preserving democracy. He repeated his suggestion that a panel of retired judges be appointed to investigate future affairs like the Bar-On one. "There are sure to be many more such cases in the future, and we should be prepared for them," he said.

He said he had checked press reports that the police are leaking information from the investigation and "found these charges completely baseless."

He said he had spoken to Lieberman 15 minutes after the television appearance, in which he said the police are being used. Kahalani said Lieberman would consider apologizing.

Many opposition MKs, noticeably committee chairman Salah Tarif (Labor), Dalia Itzik (Labor), Taleh A-Sanaa (Democratic Arab Party), and Salah Salim (Hadash), accused Lieberman of trying to scare the police out of investigating the case, and said his statements were anti-democratic. "It starts with attacks on the media and police and ends with an attack on democracy itself," said Salim.

Benny Elon (Moladet) and Nissim Dahan (Shas) noted the number of cases of investigations into public figures who are found innocent in court.

Emanuel Zissman (Third Way) complained about the leaks which "are the only source of information while the whole country anxiously awaits the outcome of this unprecedented investigation."

The police team investigating the alleged deal believes that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Justice Minister Tzahi Hanegbi are not connected with the affair, and that there is no concrete evidence that the deal in fact existed. Police said they had questioned Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert

Principal still at school after conviction for stealing

By BATSEVA TSUR and Itim Yehud.

The principal of a comprehensive high school in Yehud was sentenced yesterday to one year's probation and fined NIS 10,000 by a magistrate's court after he worked out a plea-bargain to drop charges against him of theft and breach of trust. The Education Ministry plans to look into whether Dr. Yosef Meshulam, 62, should be dismissed.

Ministry Director-General Ben Zion Dell will contact the Yehud Local Council to see if there are plans to fire Meshulam. At the same time, he will meet with Meshulam to hear his version of the case, the ministry spokesman said.

"The dismissal is not automatic," spokesman Benny Shukrun said. "We have to read the court verdict and decide whether it warrants dismissing him, whether the charges are connected with his position as an educator ... He is very well liked in

Yehud."

Meshulam, a resident of Givat Shmuel, was found guilty of using the funds collected by the school's parents' committee for his own purposes. He was the sole signatory to the account in which the money was deposited.

The court found that Meshulam had taken an interest-free "loan" of NIS 25,000 for himself, and that he had given several other "loans" to family members and friends. These included employees of the school, his brother-in-law, and the principal of another school. The loans were for sums of NIS 500-NIS 15,000.

In addition, he had given fictitious receipts for money taken from the account that supposedly covered transportation for pupils, but actually went to a junior league soccer team.

Meshulam was also found guilty of giving jobs to friends and falsifying documents so that they would get more pay for "experience."

Rabbi Yosef: I still love Deri

By SARAH HOMIG

Shas mentor Rabbi Ovadia Yosef last night vehemently denied any rift with Aryeh Deri. "I love him dearly," Yosef told Channel 2, after refusing to grant an interview to Channel 1, for breaking the story.

Yosef also denied there had been a "Bar-On-for-Hebron" deal. "I never even heard of [Ronit] Bar-On," he stated. "I authorized the Shas agreement to support the Hebron agreement two weeks before the vote on it, after the prime minister and defence minister visited me

when I was in hospital. That was before the attorney-general business ever came up, so there was no conspiracy."

Yosef said that Deri consulted with him when he heard his attorney Dan Avi-Yitzhak was being considered for attorney-general. "I told him not to agree to that because what would he do at the end of the trial without the lawyer who has been handling it for him all along?"

The Shas ministers, according to Yosef, did not consult him about the Bar-On vote in the cabinet, and he later even chided them for this.



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Knesset panel slams El Al over use of uranium ballast in 747s

By EVELYN GORDON

El Al should replace all the uranium in its Boeing 747 aircraft with tungsten, the Knesset Economics Committee demanded yesterday.

However, neither El Al nor the Civil Aviation Administration seemed amenable.

The committee was discussing the crash of an El Al plane in Amsterdam in October 1992. According to a recent article in *Yedioth Aharonot*, there has been an unusually high incidence of cancer in the crash area since, which appears to be linked to burning uranium from the plane. Until 1981, all Boeing 747s used between 750 and 1,100 pounds of depleted uranium as ballast in the tail.

In 1981, Boeing decided to begin using tungsten in all its new planes, due to "concern about safety expressed by operators," according to a letter from the company to the US Federal Aviation Administration which was presented to the committee. However, it did not order its customers to

replace the uranium in existing planes. As a result, nine of El Al's 13 747s still carry uranium.

Tanya Edelstein, the Civil Aviation Administration's supervisor of dangerous materials, told the committee that both uranium and tungsten are heavy metals which are dangerous if breathed. However, she said, uranium burns at much lower temperatures than tungsten, so the chances of dangerous vapor being released in the event of an accident are much lower with tungsten.

In addition, noted Dr. Emdad Ne'eman, of the Environment Ministry, tungsten is not radioactive.

Robert Gero, president of the Ashot Ashkelon company, which produces the tungsten counterweights for Boeing and other airplane manufacturers, added that tungsten is a common material used in most light bulbs. So far, he said, the company has not found that the material causes any environmental problems.

In light of this, committee members demanded to know why El Al did not vol-

untarily replace its uranium counterweights with tungsten.

El Al managing director Yoel Feldschu replied that it was not El Al's job to do so without instructions from Boeing, and charged that the whole issue had been blown out of proportion by a group of Amsterdam residents who are hoping to win a lawsuit against the company.

"Boeing is the only one authorized to order the replacement," Feldschu said. "Don't you think you ought to take the initiative and replace the counterweights on your own, in order to avoid a future disaster?" demanded committee chairman Elie Goldschmidt (Labor), noting that El Al is responsible for the safety of hundreds of thousands of Israeli travelers.

"We will switch them only at the manufacturer's instruction," repeated Feldschu. "No company replaces [parts] without an okay [from the manufacturer]."

Moshe Sharon, head of the Civil Aviation Administration, backed Feldschu. The FAA has okayed the use of uranium, he

said, and the CAA follows the FAA's rules. "I am not aware of any problem or any replacement of materials," he said.

"I recommend that we be careful about raising claims that have no scientific basis," he added, referring to the charge that the El Al crash was the cause of the increased incidence of cancer in Amsterdam.

Boeing, however, appeared to refute Feldschu's claim that he could replace the uranium only on orders from the company.

"The extent of the continued presence of depleted uranium on the early 747 airplanes is dependent on the respective operators and therefore unknown to Boeing," the company said in the letter to the FAA distributed to the committee.

At the end of the meeting, Goldschmidt accused both El Al and the CAA of negligence in their handling of the matter, and demanded that El Al return to the committee within a week with a promise to replace its uranium counterweights with tungsten.

7-year-old raped in Ramle

Ramle police are searching for a male aged 18-20, who reportedly raped a seven-year-old girl Sunday evening after slashing her brother's face with a knife.

According to police, the youth, who they believe to be a resident of the city, lured the girl, her 10-year-old brother, and a friend into a nearby field.

The suspect then grabbed the girl and threatened the two boys with death if they moved or screamed.

To demonstrate his seriousness, the youth slashed the face of the victim's brother before stripping the girl, and then violently raping her, according to the children. As the rapist fled the scene, the three children rushed home to their parents, who immediately took them to Assaf Harofeh Hospital before reporting the crime to the police.

The girl, who was questioned by police yesterday morning, is reportedly still in a state of shock and is listed in moderate-to-serious condition. According to police, the suspect is slightly overweight, approximately 1.60 meters tall, with black, curly hair and a swarthy complexion.



Mama loshen
Tourism Minister Moshe Katsav, speaking in Farsi, answers questions called in to the Israel Radio studio by listeners in Iran and other countries yesterday. Katsav was born in Iran. (Isaac Harari)

Tourism fair opens amid concern about the future

By HAIM SHAPIRO

The International Mediterranean Peace Tourism Market (IMPTM) which opened last night in Tel Aviv may have been the biggest ever in its four-year history, but its opening was accompanied by a sense of disquiet about the future of Israel's tourism industry.

Tourism Minister Moshe Katsav, whose first year in office was marked by a seven percent drop in incoming tourism compared to last year, chose to begin his remarks at a press conference marking the opening of the IMPTM by pointing out that other countries had also suffered a drop in tourism last year. Cyprus was down by 8%, Greece by 11%, and Spain by 4%, he said.

"I hope that in 1997 the situation will be peaceful and quiet and that we will see an increase," Katsav said.

Unwilling to commit himself concerning a resurgence of tourism, Katsav was at first unwilling to set any goal for the number of incoming tourists for 1997. Tourism, he insisted, was not like an industry where one could talk about specific numbers. When pressed, he set a relatively modest goal, to have more than 2.5 million incoming visitors, compared to the 2.36 million who arrived in 1996.

Ayal Shmueli, publisher of *Israel Travel News*, which is organizing the event, admitted that this year was more difficult than previous years. At the same time, he pointed out, there were participants from such countries as Malaysia and Indonesia.

The Palestinian Authority is also participating in the fair for the first time this year.

Man killed in fall

Police said a man found dead on Tel Aviv's Allenby Street yesterday evening was apparently a Romanian worker who had fallen from the third floor while drunk.

A Yokne'am man, meanwhile, was seriously injured when he fell 15 meters from his roof yesterday.

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By Ellen Feingold MD and Miriam Freier
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BACKGROUND

Israel-Vatican relations: A long, slow thaw

By HAIM SHAPIRO

When Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu called upon Pope John Paul II in the Vatican yesterday, it was a far cry from Theodor Herzl's visit to Pope Pius X in 1904.

Herzl requested a chilly response to a request that the Vatican back the establishment of a Jewish state in the Holy Land.

"The Jews have not recognized our Lord, and therefore the church cannot recognize the Jewish people," Herzl reported the pope as saying.

Relations did not seem to get much better over the decades. When the State of Israel was established, the Vatican firmly backed the internationalization of Jerusalem. Though relations between Jews and Roman Catholics seemed to improve dramatically following the Second Vatican Conference and the publication of *Nostra Aetate* in 1965, relations between Israel and the Vatican appeared to continue to languish.

Although the church had officially renounced "the theology of contempt," many Jews remained convinced that the Vatican's refusal to establish diplomatic relations with Israel was rooted in a theology that rejected the idea that the Jews could ever again become a free people in their own land. When the pope received Yasser Arafat in 1982, relations between the two entities seemed at an all-time low.

Thus many Vatican-watchers, both Jewish and Roman Catholic, were surprised to hear in July 1992 that a meeting had been held between then Foreign Ministry director-general Yosef Hadass and Vatican undersecretary for foreign affairs Msgr. Claudio Maria Celli. The talks, the announcement said, were aimed at establishing relations between Israel and the Vatican.

The announcement was fol-

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A papal visit

Yesterday's meeting between Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and Pope John Paul II was the first between these two leaders, but such meetings are no longer considered extraordinary. Since the establishment of full diplomatic relations three years ago, relations between the Vatican and Israel have developed a routine quality that is welcome. The next great milestone is the first official visit of Pope John Paul II to Israel, to which he has committed "in principle, before the year 2000."

ing antisemitism. The current pope has done more than any other to advance this reconciliation through personal example, most dramatically by his visit to a Rome synagogue in 1986. The agreement to establish relations between Israel and the Vatican was to pave the way for further efforts to "combat all forms of antisemitism."



Truth sometimes stings

In a letter to Yitzhak Rabin dated September 1, 1975, president Ford stated clearly: "The US has not developed a final position on the borders of Israel. Should it do so, it will give great weight to Israel's position that any peace agreement with Syria must be predicated on Israel remaining on the Golan Heights."

YOHANAN RAMATI for the car that blew up was stamped in Arabic with the seals of moneychangers in Syria). But the US again avoided blaming Syria. Instead, it pointed the finger at Iran. Needless to say, the investigation came to nothing.

that the terrorists were furnished with false passports at Iran's embassy in Damascus, but concluded that President Assad, while expressing readiness to negotiate with Israel, continues to help terrorist movements and states hostile to the West and to the peace process.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

TEACHING Sir, - Amotz Asa-El ("Barak's team," January 23) perpetuates a gross canard when he speaks of Avraham Shohat "sanctioning steep salary hikes for teachers, [and] university professors..."

COEXISTENCE IN HEBRON Sir, - Hebron means a lot to me. My mother was born there and lived there until the 1929 massacre of Jews by Arab rioters. One of the casualties was Rabbi Meir Castel, her grandfather. If it wasn't for a righteous Arab who protected her and her mother, I wouldn't be writing this letter today.

HIGH JINKS Sir, - At last a cry in the wilderness. Michal Yudelman has said what is troubling this poor little country ("It's the fat cats that get the extra cream," January 24). How can we trust the people who run the country if their only concern is to safeguard their own interests at the expense of the workers? It is shameful that they voted themselves a 40 percent increase in salary plus extra perks while many people live on NIS 2,000 a month and less and redundancy is an everyday occurrence.

The spotlight on the Swiss

A cartoon so vile that it immediately evokes associations with the Nazi Der Stuermer appeared recently in a Swiss newspaper called 24 Hours. It depicts a row of grotesque Jews clad in black praying at a Western Wall constructed of gold bricks.

ALEXANDER ZVIELI belonging to Hitler himself was uncovered much later. But there was evidence that German funds deposited in Swiss banks were used to set up dummy subsidiaries and holding companies worldwide. One such was the American General Airline and Film belonging to A.G. Farbenindustrie. The Allies and the Swiss differed fundamentally over the extent of the German holdings. The Swiss suggested that the dispute be referred to neutral international arbitration, with the proviso that they themselves be granted half the assets to be liquidated, in return "for services and materials rendered."

DEALING with the Israeli government bureaucracy has been the most traumatizing experience of my life. Because I was denied a work permit, I have to work for a non-profit organization abroad. I receive a small allowance which barely covers my rent and bills. (I've noticed that American athletes who play for Israeli sports teams don't seem to have any problems acquiring work permits; some even get Israeli citizenship.)

AMIEL SCHOTZ Beersheba.

LUCKY LOSS Sir, - The luckiest people in the world are the Left wing in Israel, because they lost the last election. They committed the people of Israel to an impossible agreement which could not be terminated. If, by an almost inconceivable miracle this would bring any sort of peace, they would claim credit for it. If, as is almost certain, it is going to prove a catastrophe, then they will blame everybody but themselves.

CHANGE OF CLIMATE Sir, - The oft-heard claim - whether voiced in smug tones by the supporters of the previous government or in tones of gloom by the diehards of the national camp - that the current Hebron agreement is no better (if not worse) than its predecessor, does not take into account the change in the psychological climate surrounding it.

It must be widened to include German deposits registered by the Allies after the war

The writer is a freelancer.

ISRAEL PICKHOLTZ Elazar.

HERBERT GRAUS Jerusalem.

CELIA MANOVSKY Ginot Shomron.

The writer is a journalist living in Jerusalem.

World of virtuoso... A virtuoso... turn to grass... Beersheba... This block contains various advertisements and text on the right side of the page, including a large 'World of' at the top, 'A virtuoso' in the middle, and 'turn to grass' at the bottom. There are also smaller text elements and a signature at the very bottom.

Handwritten text in a box at the top of the page.

ISRAELI SHARES IN NEW YORK

Table with columns: LAST CHANGE, AMEX, NASDAQ. Lists various Israeli companies and their share prices.

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Table with columns: LAST CHANGE. Lists various Israeli companies and their share prices.

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MISHTANIM LEADING 100 TASE ISSUES

Table with columns: LAST CHANGE. Lists the top 100 Mishtanim TASE issues.

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Table with columns: LAST CHANGE. Lists the top 100 Mishtanim TASE issues.

INTERNATIONAL SHARES

Table with columns: LAST CHANGE. Lists international share prices.

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Table with columns: LAST CHANGE. Lists international share prices.

ISRAELI STOCKS IN US

Table with columns: Last, Change. Lists Israeli stocks trading on the US market.

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NEW YORK

Table with columns: Last, Change. Lists various New York stock market data.

Table with columns: Last, Change. Lists various New York stock market data.

Table with columns: Last, Change. Lists various New York stock market data.

Table with columns: Last, Change. Lists various New York stock market data.

TASE ROUNDUP

Shares at record high

Stock indexes hit a record high yesterday as the shekel weakened against the dollar after the Bank of Israel eased some foreign currency supervision.

Key Representative Rates

Table showing key representative rates including US Dollar, Sterling, and Mark.

NYSE STOCKS

Table showing NYSE stock performance with columns for Declines, Unchanged, Advances, and various stock prices.

OTHER STOCK MARKET INDEXES

Table showing other stock market indexes like FTSE 100, Nikkei, etc.

DOLLAR CROSSEXTES (US)

Table showing dollar crossrates for various currencies.

US COMMODITIES

Table showing US commodity prices for various goods.

LONDON COMMODITIES

Table showing London commodity prices.

SPOT MARKET METALS (US)

Table showing spot market metal prices.

NEW YORK METAL FUTURES

Table showing New York metal futures prices.

LONDON METAL FIXES

Table showing London metal fixings prices.

DATA COMMUNICATIONS VIA

Table showing data communications via various providers.

WORLD MARKET ROUNDUP

Most Euro shares down, DAX at all-time high

LONDON (Reuters) - European bourses slipped yesterday, except in Germany, which closed at a record high as interest rate jitters and a weaker Wall Street encouraged profit-taking after the long bull run.

US STOCKS DIP SLIGHTLY

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Stock prices ended slightly lower yesterday as investors jumped to the sidelines, unwilling to take chances ahead of the start today of the Federal Reserve Committee's two-day meeting on interest rates.

WHERE TO GO

Museums: TEL AVIV MUSEUM. Andros Serrano: The Morgue. Soviet Photography from the Museum collection. Lucien Freud: selection of works. Tzvi Hecker: Israeli artists. Visual Reality: The domestic and realistic in contemporary Israeli art.

TEL AVIV

EMERGENCY PHARMACIES: Jerusalem: 673-1475; Beit Shimon, 581-0108; Dar Adawa, Herod's Gate, 629-2058.

GENERAL ASSISTANCE

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DUTY HOSPITALS

Jerusalem: Bikur Holim (Internal, obstetrics); Shaare Zedek (surgery, ENT); Hadassah Ein Kerem (orthopedics, pediatrics, ophthalmology).

POLICE

Jerusalem: 100 FIRE 102. Police and fire services in Jerusalem.

INVESTMENTS

Source: COMSTOCK TRADING LTD. (DATE FEB 97)

LONDON

Table showing London stock market data.

PARIS

Table showing Paris stock market data.

FRANKFURT

Table showing Frankfurt stock market data.

MARKETS

Source: COMSTOCK TRADING LTD. (DATE FEB 97)

NEWS

in brief

Bill calls for tougher sentences for sex crimes

The Justice Ministry will soon submit a bill requiring minimum sentences for serious sexual crimes, the ministry said yesterday. The minimum will be one-fourth of the maximum sentence. However, the law will not take effect for at least a year, to give a public commission on this subject time to finish its work.

The commission, headed by Supreme Court Justice Eliezer Goldberg, is examining questions such as how to reconcile minimum sentencing with the principle of judicial discretion. One proposed solution is that the bill might allow judges to give less than the minimum sentences in special circumstances.

Evelyn Gordon

Israel, Greece expand cultural relations

Israel and Greece have agreed to broaden cultural ties significantly, especially in the realm of arts and exhibitions. The agreements came about during Education Minister Zevulun Hammer's visit to Greece this week. Events planned include an archaeological exhibition from the Athens museum to be displayed here next year, and performances by Israeli artists in Salonika. The Tel Aviv Museum will also host Greek artists and hold reciprocal exhibitions in Greece.

Jerusalem Post Staff

Hospital to facilitate surrogacy proceedings

Rambam Hospital has opened a non-profit center for helping couples who want babies under a surrogacy agreement. The new service, which follows last year's passage of a law regulating surrogacy, includes finding women willing and eligible to bear the contracting couples' child, preparing a contract, in-vitro fertilization and social and psychological support.

The couple will not be charged a middleman's fee, but will only have to pay the actual cost of treatment. Recently, a for-profit center was established elsewhere to supply services to such couples.

Judy Siegel

Blood donations to MDA increase

Magen David Adom collected 241,553 units of blood last year — 17,240 units more than in 1995, or a 7 percent increase. MDA said that in order to meet the country's blood needs, 5% of the population must donate. Blood supply needs continue to grow because of the population increase, advanced medical technology and aging. To keep up, MDA needs to collect some 1,000 units every weekday. Hospital demands for blood components (such as red cells, plasma and gamma globulin) also are increasing due to more complicated treatments such as transplants of bone-marrow and various organs.

Judy Siegel

Members named for A-G commission

Four leading jurists have agreed to join the Shamgar Commission on the status of the attorney-general, the Justice Ministry said yesterday. They are former justice ministers David Liba'i and Moshe Nissim, former attorney-general Haim Zadok and Hebrew University Law Professor Ruth Gabizon. The commission, which will be headed by former Supreme Court president Meir Shamgar, will begin its work soon, the ministry said.

Evelyn Gordon

Mordechai: No zone pullout

By LIAT COLLINS

Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai (Likud) rejected a call yesterday by Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani (Third Way) for Israel to unilaterally withdraw from the security zone and be replaced by an international force.

Speaking at the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, Mordechai said a unilateral withdrawal would result in greater casualties among IDF soldiers, more attacks on the North and the South Lebanese Army, and would turn the local Lebanese population against Israel.

Mordechai said such suggestions "are populist," harm IDF

morale, hurt the bereaved families of soldiers "and sow false illusions that there is a magic solution to the problems of south Lebanon."

He also completely ruled out the suggestion by Meretz leader Yossi Sarid to withdraw in place of an Arab international force with Egyptian, Jordanian and Moroccan soldiers.

Kahalani told parliamentary reporters that his idea raised army morale "by letting the soldier there know that someone in Jerusalem cares."

He said by taking the initiative, Israel would be able to prevent Syrian dictates.

"We must start thinking differently; not let the Syrians deter-

mine our future and look at the long term. If we continue like this, the situation will still be the same in the next decade. We have an agreement with the Lebanese government and Hizbullah that they will not fire Katyushas at the northern Galilee," he said.

"We need to slowly withdraw and to change our concept there. If a soldier is killed then we should retaliate," Kahalani said. "But I'm not prepared for a situation in which a soldier is killed and buried and the country just continues to stare."

Mordechai rejected Kahalani's idea. "I don't see any possibility of a unilateral withdrawal," he told reporters. "It's not on the agenda. It would be a mistake.

Any step in that direction would bring the terror and Hizbullah to the border fence and disrupt and harm the lives of Israeli citizens."

Mordechai said UNIFIL forces already in Lebanon "are unable and don't prevent Katyusha attacks."

He said the complexity of the Lebanese situation stemmed from several factors including the "lack of sufficient, precise intelligence on Hizbullah; and the type of terrain." He also there is a problem because the number of IDF soldiers in Lebanon could never be sufficient.

"There are two possible solutions: force or the diplomatic solution," said Mordechai. "We can't swap an incomplete solution for a worse solution."



Dairy farmers protest

Dairy farmers from the Israel Cattle Breeders' Association hold a protest with their animals against the free import of ice cream and raw milk products outside the Industry and Trade Ministry yesterday. The farmers, holding placards reading, "No agriculture, no independence," and "No agriculture, no Zionism," demonstrated as the directors-general of the Industry and Trade and Agriculture ministries met inside. The farmers association said that dairy imports would cause a NIS 140 million loss to the local industry in 1997.

WEATHER

Haifa	5-13
Tiberias	6-12
Afula	5-11
Samaria	3-7
Tel Aviv	8-14
Jerusalem	2-7
Beer Sheva	5-15
Dead Sea	8-17
Eilat	6-18

Forecast: Rainy.

AROUND THE WORLD

	LOW	F	HIGH	WIND
Amsterdam	00	02	08	cloudy
Berlin	18	20	26	cloudy
Buenos Aires	18	21	27	clear
Chicago	-04	08	08	cloudy
Copenhagen	01	03	04	cloudy
Helsinki	-03	07	04	cloudy
London	01	03	08	cloudy
Hong Kong	18	20	28	rain
Jerusalem	16	17	27	cloudy
Los Angeles	13	16	24	clear
Moscow	11	12	19	cloudy
Madrid	08	11	17	cloudy
Mexico	-04	02	02	clear
Mumbai	21	22	24	cloudy

Winning cards

In yesterday's daily Chance drawing, the winning cards were the eight of spades, the ace of hearts, the seven of diamonds and the queen of clubs.

Tichon asked to block 'racist' bill

MKaleb A-Sanaa (Democratic Arab Party) has asked Knesset Speaker Dan Tichon to prevent Michael Kleiner (Gesher-Likud) from submitting his bill that says only a Jew can be prime minister.

A-Sanaa based his request on a clause added to the Knesset House Rules when Meir Kahane was an MK which allows the Speaker to refuse someone the right to submit a bill which is racist. Tichon said Kleiner has not yet submitted his bill but the Speaker would examine it when he did.

Liav Collins

MKs attack Beilin-Eitan plan

By LIAT COLLINS

MK Yossi Beilin, running for the Labor Party leadership, yesterday came under heavy attack by his party colleagues at a Labor faction meeting and later by MKs from both coalition and opposition parties in the plenum, when he presented the outline of his agreement with Likud faction chairman Michael Eitan.

Communications Minister Limor Livnat said the agreement is a personal initiative and does not commit the government. Not all the clauses are acceptable to the government, she said. But she praised the attempt to reach a national consensus.

The government, she said, aims at presenting a plan for the permanent settlement behind which there will be national consensus. The plan would preserve defense needs, settlements, control over water sources, and a unified Jerusalem. The government is against the creation of Palestinian state, Livnat said.

Most of the Labor MKs who spoke at the faction meeting criticized the Beilin-Eitan agreement. Ehud Barak, who is also competing for the party leadership, described it as "a murky

document [which] serves the political interests of [Prime Minister] Benjamin Netanyahu."

He also related to the understanding reached between Beilin and the Palestinian Authority's Mahmoud Abbas [Abu Mazen]. "I hope the Abu Mazen document didn't prevent us from remaining in power and I hope the Beilin-Eitan document doesn't stop us from returning to power," Barak said.

Beilin told the faction: "This is the most important document signed between MKs from two sides of Israeli politics in decades. The document proves, in addition to the Beilin-Abu Mazen document, that there is someone to talk to and what to talk about regarding the permanent arrangements."

Eitan sent out a call from the Knesset podium to Jodea, Samaria, and Gaza residents to sign the document. He said the agreement offered a commitment to the settlers by annexing most settlements; barring the right of return; preserving Jerusalem as the united capital of Israel; and determining that the Jordan River will be the security border.

Eitan warned extremists among the settlers that

if they split the nation they would be the first to pay the price. "Only a unified and united people supporting its government will enable [it] to stand on vital interests. Being split will end in giving up in the face of external pressures."

Benjamin Ben-Eliezer told the faction he was "shocked" by the document because Beilin "had only gone in one direction, in the direction of the Likud. According to what is written in the document, 52 percent of the West Bank will be annexed because of settlements."

He attacked Beilin for seeking popularity with the right because of his candidacy for the party leadership and premiership.

Ephraim Sneh, another party leadership hopeful, said the agreement tended toward "massive annexation" of settlements. "There is a critical mass without which the Palestinian entity cannot be realized. We can't take part in a half-separation, half-annexation," he said.

Beilin was supported by Haim Ramon and Shlomo Ben-Ami, another candidate for the party's top spot, both of whom who signed the Beilin-Eitan document. Yona Yahav and Rafi Etul both said they would sign it soon.

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73 killed in IAF helicopter collision

Ivry to head external disaster probe

By HERB KEINON and ARIEH O'SULLIVAN

Seventy-three soldiers and airmen were killed yesterday when two Yasur 2000 helicopters transporting forces to the security zone, collided over Moshav She'ar Yashuv in the Galilee Panhandle, Chief of General Staff Lt.-Gen. Amnon Lipkin-Shahak said last night.

It was the worst air disaster in IAF history, and officials said there were no survivors.

As of 2 a.m., only 25 of the bodies had been identified.

The crash occurred at around 7 p.m. in foggy weather conditions. The transport came after a day of heavy fighting in Lebanon.

At a news conference at 1:30 a.m., Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai announced the establishment of an independent commission of inquiry to determine the cause of the disaster. The commission will be headed by former Defense Ministry director-general and air force commander David Ivry.

The two aircraft, carrying eight airmen and 65 soldiers, including 13 officers, were shuttling troops from Mahanayim to Lebanon as part of a troop rotation, officials said. In recent months, helicopters have been used increasingly as a way to

"I saw the two helicopters crash in the air," She'ar Yashuv resident Albert Alfasi told Channel 1. "The engine of one of them fell 200 meters from my home. We all dove to the ground."

Another eyewitness, Smadar Edling from the Mevo'ot Hermon Guest House, said, "I was in the parking lot at 7 p.m., and heard helicopter activity. I looked into the valley and heard a loud explosion. I thought we were being hit by



Rescue workers surround the body of a soldier killed in last night's helicopter crash.

'I heard shouts from soldiers', Page 2.

Katynushas. There was another loud explosion, and I saw a helicopter continue to fly very low.

"I thought he was sending up flares, and then disappeared. I saw a huge explosion, and another smaller one, and the helicopter continued to fly, and then fell."

Witnesses reported that David Adoni ambulances, fire crews from Kiryat Shmona, and IDF rescue teams reached the disaster area and began to douse the flames and to remove the bodies. Roads in the area were closed and residents of homes near the crash sites were evacuated.

Boaz Norkin, head of the MDA Northern Region, said 22 vehicles and tens of volunteers and professionals arrived at the scene.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called for unity at a time of tragedy and canceled his trip to Jordan scheduled for today.

"This is an unimaginably grave tragedy. The hearts of the nation are with the victims. The whole country weeps today over the loss of these young fighters," Netanyahu said in a statement issued by his office.

He spoke by phone with King Hussein, who sent his condolences. Netanyahu also received a condolence phone call from Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat.

The meeting between the two scheduled for tomorrow at Erez also was postponed, Israel Radio said.

After visiting the crash site together with senior IDF officers,

Knesset to hold special session, Page 2.

minimize the use of roads in south Lebanon and the risk of roadside bombs.

One of the helicopters crashed into a guest house at the entrance to She'ar Yashuv, while the other apparently tried to make an emergency landing before crashing a few kilometers away in the cemetery of Kibbutz Dafna. No one at Kibbutz Dafna or She'ar Yashuv was reported injured.

Eyewitnesses said explosions were heard for several hours after the crash, as the massive firepower and ammunition carried by the helicopters continued to explode in the conflagration.

US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright called Netanyahu last night to express condolences on behalf of the administration, and offered to help in any way possible.

The White House released a statement last night saying that President Clinton sent a message to Netanyahu extending, on behalf of all Americans, "sincere condolences to the families of the victims and the people and Government of Israel. Our nation's thoughts and prayers

are with the Israeli people as they grieve the loss of their dedicated service personnel."

Other members of the commission of inquiry are former paratroop head Maj-Gen (res.) Amos Yaron; Maj-Gen (res.) Ben-Zion Farhi, former president of military court of appeals; Brig-Gen. Shmuel Eldar, a former helicopter pilot, and retired judge Haim Shapira.

Eyewitness Yigal Chen, from She'ar Yashuv, told Israel Radio,

"I was in my home with my two sons and heard a massive explosion. There was a ball of fire and the entire house was illuminated. We went outside and saw a huge fire two houses away and we heard the sound of a helicopter. We looked up and saw a helicopter, and it appeared the pilot was looking for a place to land. I have had more than a few experiences in the army, but never saw anything like this."

Chen said the pilot of the second helicopter turned on his lights after the crash and appeared to be looking for a place to land. The helicopter crashed into an empty guest home at the entrance to the moshav.

The previous worst air disaster in IAF history was on May 10, 1977, when a Sikorsky CH-53 crashed near Jericho. Fifty-four soldiers were killed in that crash.

Hillel Kuntler in Washington contributed to this report.

Mordechai said: "The IDF soldiers who died were the best of the nation's young men who were on their way to an IDF position in Lebanon. They were carrying out the mission of defending the settlements of the North. All the citizens of Israel are in mourning and shock and are feeling the pain and sorrow."

"It's a terrible tragedy. It's the worst tragedy the air force has known in its 50-year history," said President Ezer Weizman.

4 missing as US Navy plane disappears at sea during training with Israel Navy

By ARIEH O'SULLIVAN

A US Navy plane disappeared at sea during a training exercise involving an Israeli submarine yesterday and its four-man crew was feared dead, security sources said.

The plane was a sub-hunting F-3 known as a Viking, and was thought to have crashed somewhere in the eastern Mediterranean, the sources said. US Navy search and rescue teams swept the waters off the coast for the missing plane, but, at press time, no sign of the F-3 had been found.

A US government official has confirmed that the incident occurred.

The apparent crash took place during joint maneuvers with the Israeli Navy and followed a visit to the South Fleet's USS Theodore Roosevelt aircraft carriers by Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai.

Past helicopter disasters

By ARIEH O'SULLIVAN

During the past 26 years, 103 people have been killed in 11 IAF helicopter accidents.

- September 17, 1996 - Three killed when a Navy Dolphin helicopter crashed off Rosh Hanikra. The cause of the crash was never determined. One of the three bodies still has not been found.
- March 31, 1996 - Seven killed when a Yasur 2000 transport helicopter crashed in the Judean Desert while practicing clandestine troop delivery. The helicopter completely burned and IAF investigators have never determined if it was a technical malfunction or human error. Two survived the crash.
- December 1994 - A CH-53 crashed into Palmachim beach while trying to lift a heavy cargo. Three crewmen died.
- January 12, 1994 - OC Central Command Maj-Gen. Nehemia Tamari and three other officers died when their helicopter crashed in fog near the command landing pad in northern Jerusalem.
- July 1, 1992 - Sr-Sgt-Maj Gil Rosenthal is killed when a helicopter crashed into the sea off Rosh Hanikra during a rescue drill.
- April 25, 1990 - Seven airmen are killed when two Sikorsky CH-53 helicopters collided near Ofra during a training exercise.
- December 30, 1988 - A pilot died when his Yasur 2000 helicopter crashed during a border-marking mission north of Eilat.
- September 9, 1984 - Five IDF soldiers died in a Bell 212 helicopter crash near Beit She'an.
- May 10, 1977 - A Sikorsky CH-53 slammed into a hill during a nighttime training exercise near Jericho, killing all 54 paratroopers and air force personnel on board.
- April 21, 1974 - Two helicopters returning from missions on the Syrian border collided at Mahanayim Airport, killing eight crew members and soldiers.
- July 8, 1971 - A Yasur crashed into the ocean near Yamit. Ten passengers and crew members were killed.

Item contributed to this report.

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'I heard shouts from soldiers'

By DAVID RUDGE

Hananiya Malka was sitting with his wife, Simmi, in their restaurant in Moshav She'ar Yashuv in the Galilee Panhandle when they heard a strange noise overhead followed by a loud explosion. "I thought at first it might be a Katyusha or something like that. Then I saw the flames from a house which is used as a guest house for visitors," said Malka.

building, which was empty at the time. "I started to turn off the gas and electricity and then I saw the wings and rotors of a helicopter sticking out of the building in the midst of the flames," he said. Malka was the first to reach the scene. He ran out with a hose thinking he would be able to douse the flames. But the flames continued to pour from the stricken craft and the building. "There were explosions, apparently from munitions carried by the soldiers on board the helicopter," he said. "I heard shouts, to my great sorrow, from soldiers who were trapped inside the helicopter, shouting for help, but

there was nothing that could be done. "The flames were too fierce that with my hose I couldn't do anything, nothing," said Malka. One of the aircraft had crashed directly into the empty building. The other helicopter had fallen in open land across the road from the moshav in fields belonging to Kibbutz Dafna. Residents of the moshav raced to the scene, but like Malka were unable to do anything except raise the alarm. Within minutes, Magen David Adom ambulances, fire crews from Kiryat Shmona and IDF rescue teams reached the disaster area and began to douse the flames

and begin the gruesome task of removing the bodies. Boaz Norkin, head of the MDA Northern Region, said 22 vehicles and tens of volunteers and professionals arrived at the scene. "The scene was awful, and the worst part of it all was that we couldn't do anything despite arriving within seconds of the accident from all around the area," said Norkin. MDA had all available personnel working at the scene. The whole area was closed by the military. An officer of the Northern Region fire department said he arrived within seven

minutes, but the army only permitted them to approach the fire when all were fully equipped with combat vests and helmets. Wreckage from the craft was spread over hundreds of meters. The rescue teams used flares to light up the region in the hope of finding survivors who might have been thrown out of the craft. Residents of the moshav said the crash had occurred not far from children's homes for fear the flames would spread. Others took shelter. The moshav residents could only stand and watch until the flames had been brought sufficiently under control so they could help in the

rescue evacuation. "I never thought for a minute that a helicopter had crashed into the boarding house until I saw the wing sticking out," said Malka. "My wife was in a state of shock and couldn't stop crying because of the soldiers. If this had happened in the summer, the place would have been full with visitors and it would have been an even worse disaster. "But this is bad enough. It's terrible. When I saw the bodies of the young soldiers being brought out and laid out on the ground, I felt anger, frustration and deep, deep heartache," said Malka.

Knesset to hold special session

By SARAH HONIG

The Knesset will hold a special session of mourning at 11 a.m. with opening remarks by Knesset Speaker Dan Tichon along with remarks by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. President Ezer Weizman is expected to attend. The Knesset will close early to enable MKs to attend the funerals. Labor leader Shimon Peres stated yesterday that "though this is not the time for blame, the time has come to put an end to this involvement in Lebanon... We will end up making the same concessions in the end anyway but only after more blood has been spilled." Peres was speaking to TV's Channel 1 from Switzerland. His was the only discordant political voice last night. Peres stressed that he does not support "unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon, but we must be brave and not delude ourselves or we will end up paying for it in blood. There is a price for peace with Lebanon and with Syria and we must utter this truth and not toy with illusions. Others in Peres's party refrained

from partisan politics. Peres's chief rival in Labor, MK Ehud Barak, issued a statement saying: "The heart breaks. At this bitter hour there is no right wing or left wing, no opposition or coalition. At this bitter hour we are all IDF, all State of Israel... Tears choke us but we will continue in the path of peace and security. We have no other option. A tide of tears sweeps Israel tonight." The Labor Party issued a statement expressing shock. "Like the rest of the nation we feel the terrible pain of the disaster at She'ar Yashuv." The Likud also issued a statement saying that "The pain, the grief and the tears are those of all of us, of the entire nation." Education Minister Zevulun Hammer instructed the school system to devote time to the disaster today. The pupils and teachers will commemorate the fallen, express sympathy for the families and discuss the disaster. "The school system is no island and cannot remain untouched by the national mourning. Pupils who witnessed the crash will get special counselling. Liat Collins contributed to this report



The IAF's workhorse - the Yasur 2000 transport helicopter.

(IDF Spokesman)

By ARIEH O'SULLIVAN

The US-made Sikorsky CH-53, known in Hebrew as the Yasur, is the workhorse of the IDF. The 1960s vintage aircraft has been upgraded by the IAF and is expected to take the IDF into the next decade. The IAF had 42 of them, according to the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies Middle East Military Balance. The heavy transport helicopter is made to carry up to 50 passengers, but due to the 1977 tragic crash of

the CH-53 in which 54 paratroopers and crewmen were killed, the IDF restricted its maximum seating to 35 soldiers plus a three-man crew. The Yasur also is capable of transporting light vehicles. Eliezer Cohen, a former CH-53 squadron commander, said there is no substitute for the CH-53. He said the IAF had chosen the CH-

53 because of its survivability and maneuverability. "There are many helicopters like this in the IDF and they are doing great work," Cohen said. "I wouldn't want to guess how many flights they have done until now." Another squadron commander, Ofer Ben-Peretz, said the upgraded Yasur 2000 is equipped with sophisticated avionics which

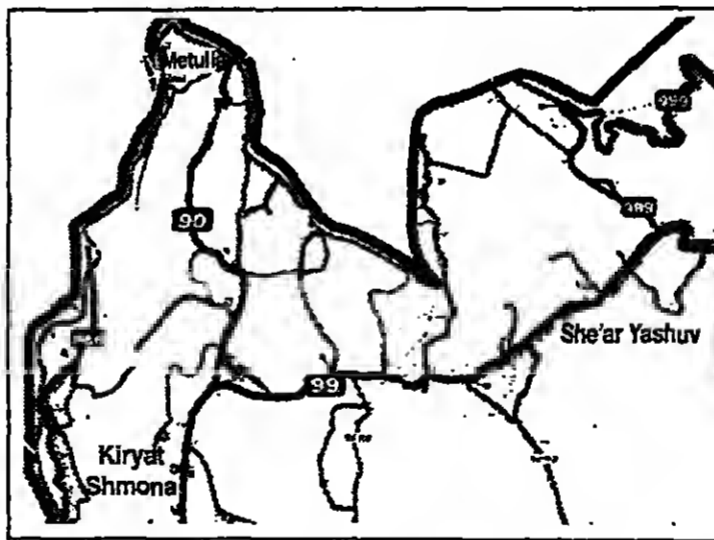
allow it to operate at night in most weather conditions. "When there is a need to transport a large number of troops quickly this is the best tool we have," he said. The Yasur is not equipped with a "black box," but its internal cockpit conversations are recorded and investigators are likely to use this to determine

the reasons for the crash. The cause of the previous crash of a Yasur last April was never determined. One pilot, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said helicopters are more likely to crash than fixed-winged aircraft since they fly at low altitudes and are more complicated machines. He said the final say on whether an aircraft would fly lay ultimately with the pilot, who could overrule a superior officer if he felt the weather was too hazardous.

Yasur: IAF workhorse

She'ar Yashuv, a frontier settlement

She'ar Yashuv, a moshav in the Hula Valley, is a frontier settlement that lies seven km. east of Kiryat Shmona, in the Galilee panhandle. Founded in 1940, the moshav was attacked by Syrians and then abandoned. It was reinhabited in 1949 by Hungarian and Romanian immigrants. Up until the Six Day War, the moshav was harassed by Syrian forces from positions to its east. She'ar Yashuv, or "A Remnant Shall Return," is affiliated with Oved Hazoni. The moshav has some 250 inhabitants. Jerusalem Post Staff



59 soldiers killed in action last year, 26 in accidents

By LIAT COLLINS

Only hours before dozens of soldiers were killed when two helicopters on routine trips transporting soldiers from Lebanon to Israel collided, last year's military fatality statistics were released. Fifty-nine soldiers were killed in action and 26 died in military accidents last year according to the annual report submitted by the IDF to the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee yesterday. There were 30 suicides by soldiers, compared to 43 the previ-

ous year. Although the number of fatal accidents dropped from 17 to 14 in 1996, the number of fatalities rose from 20 to 26. These figures do not include road accidents by soldiers on leave. The six training accidents include two helicopter crashes in which a total of 10 soldiers were killed, one death by electrocution, and two deaths during a diving exercise. One soldier died from heat stroke and one was run over and killed during a training accident. A soldier was killed by "friendly fire." In non-training related accidents, nine soldiers were killed in six road crashes and one died in a weapons accident. In a briefing with reporters, Colonel Assaf Sela, head of the IDF's safety division, said there had been a drop in the number of accidents resulting in light injuries, whereas there had been a slight increase in accidents

resulting in moderate to serious injuries. There was an increase in accidents during operations, the number of training accidents remained stable, and there had been a drop in "routine" accidents. The drop in road accidents in the army continued and Sela described the Course 1000 Project giving extra road training to non-professional drivers. Some 800 soldiers did the course last year. There was an increase in soldiers suffering from gastro-intestinal problems, mostly in field conditions. Twenty seven soldiers were killed in road accidents while on leave and hundreds were injured. Sela stressed that the IDF places the responsibility for safety on commanders and officers and has a policy encouraging reports of near accidents to prevent possible future incidents.

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Netanyahu mourns the nation's best soldier... Weizman appeals public to not draw conclusions about... (IDF Spokesman)

Handwritten signature or note at the bottom of the page.

Netanyahu mourns the nation's 'best sons'

By DAVID MAKOVSKY

The country is grieving over the tragic loss of its fallen "best sons," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu mournfully declared last night.

Due to the tragedy, Netanyahu has cancelled his meeting with Jordan's King Hussein in Jordan today, and reportedly is cancelling his summit meeting with Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat at the Erez Junction tomorrow.

Netanyahu declared last night, "We lost several dozens of our best sons, courageous and good soldiers of the Israel Defense Forces."

"The defense minister and the chief of staff are investigating the circumstances of the tragedy, including the scope of this disaster."

"It is clear to us that for many families of Israel their lives are

about to change beyond recognition, which will not revert back to what was before they received the bitter news. All of Israel unites tonight to bolster these families. They are all our families. They are all our sons. At this time, we bolster the IDF, which protects the nation's borders day and night.

"I pray there are no more tragedies," Netanyahu concluded. As a sign of unity, Netanyahu called upon all 120 Knesset members to fan out across the country and attend the funerals of the fallen.

The premier informed King Hussein during a phone conversation last night that he would have to cancel his trip to Amman today due to the tragedy.

Jordan's Crown Prince Hassan and Arafat both phoned to offer condolences.

Knesset throws out Kleiner bill

By LIAT COLLINS

The Knesset presidium yesterday decided that MK Michael Kleiner (Gesber-Likud) cannot submit his bill under which only a Jew is eligible to run for prime minister.

Two deputy speakers - David Tal (Shas) and Haim Dayan (Tsomet) - were in favor of allowing the bill to be presented. However, Knesset Speaker Dan Tichon and four other deputies - Sbevah Weiss (Labor), Naomi Chazao (Meretz), Meir Sheerit (Likud) and Shmaryahu Bentzur (National Religious Party) - voted against it. Their decision was made on the basis of a clause in the Knesset House Rules, included during Meir Kahane's period as an MK, which bars the submission of bills considered racist.

"We had no choice but to refuse it," Tichon said.

Kleiner decried the decision as "the death of Zionism" and promised to submit a new bill demanding that candidates for the premiership pass the same security checks that senior civil servants take.

Kleiner accused the presidium of "hypocrisy."

"Not one of them would want an Arab prime minister or question the decision which does not allow Arab MKs to sit on the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee," he said.

Kleiner denied the bill was "any more racist than the Declaration of Independence or the Law of Return."

"This is not racist - just like the US does not consider it racist to prevent someone not born there to be president. MKs represent the voters and can come from all sectors, but the premier represents the state, which is a Jewish State," he said.

"This bill is not in the same category as those despicable and repulsive bills by Kahane and others that were rightly rejected for racism."

MK Taleb A-Sanaa (Democratic Arab Party) praised the decision to ban the bill as "a victory for democracy and for Arab citizens aspiring to full equality in the State. It's a complete failure for racism and racists."



A glum-looking Michael Kleiner MK (left) hears from Knesset Chairman Dan Tichon that his bill had been rejected by the house presidium. (Isaac Harni)

Weizman appeals to public to not jump to conclusions about crash

By BATSHEVA TSUR

"This is the worst disaster in the history of Israel's air force and [its] aviation history," President Ezer Weizman said after last night's fatal helicopter accident. "To have helicopters flying in the night and under those conditions is not a simple matter."

"I appeal to the public over the pages of The Jerusalem Post to believe me that we have one of the finest fighting forces in the world; we have one of the finest defense forces - army, navy and air force - working day and night looking after the defense of our little country."

"I appeal to the country - with all the grief, sorrow and pain and questions that the public has - please don't jump to conclusions."

The president said he had full faith that the truth would come to light about the cause of the disaster.

"I know that one of the best committees of inquiry has been convened. The easiest thing now is to criticize. All of us now have

sad hearts. My heart goes out to the families who have lost their dear ones and I'll visit each and every family in the very near future."

Weizman called on the public to show restraint and react in a mature fashion, saying, "I appeal to the public: let's make it a national, mature and responsible time of anguish and grief."

Weizman, who was in Ness Ziona when informed of the disaster, drove straight to the Defense Ministry, where he conferred with Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Amnon Lipkin-Shahak and OC Air Force Maj. Gen. Eitan Ben-Eliahu. He described the atmosphere there as one of "deep grief."

"I don't want to make any kind of speculations" about what could have caused the accident, Weizman said in an interview with ITV.

"Unfortunately, many of the disasters have been with helicopters," he said in reply to a question. "But this is not the fault of the air force, which does everything possible to prevent this. We must wait for the findings of the committee of inquiry."

Attacks on IDF, SLA across security zone

By DAVID HUDGE

Heavy fighting erupted in south Lebanon yesterday, as Hizbullah gunmen launched long-range attacks on IDF and South Lebanese Army positions across the security zone.

There were no casualties among IDF or SLA troops in the exchanges which began before 7 a.m. and continued sporadically throughout the day, despite bitter cold, snow and rain in the region.

Hizbullah gunmen fired dozens of mortars and anti-tank missiles at the IDF and SLA outposts, including positions in the Jezze enclave north of the zone, during a barrage that lasted over four hours.

IDF and SLA gunners responded by blasting Hizbullah targets and firing positions north of the zone. UN sources said the IDF and SLA had fired over 250 artillery shells in the morning long-range shootout.

The fighting resumed later in the day and continued intermittently until the evening. Lebanese Foreign Minister Fares Bouze said the Lebanese government would lodge a complaint with the Group of Wrath sponsoring committee over IDF shelling of Kfar Rouman, which he said had endangered civilians and caused property damage.

Hizbullah, in a statement issued in Beirut, said it had shelled over 20 IDF and SLA positions in the morning. The statement said the attacks were to mark "Jerusalem Day" at the end of the month-long Ramadan fast. Deputy Hizbullah leader Sheikh Naim Kassem was quoted in Lebanese newspapers yesterday as saying that the organization would continue to escalate the fighting. "We will never let the occupiers rest and we will intensify the fighting until we get

every inch of our land back," Kassem was quoted as saying.

Syria, meanwhile has rejected Israel's calls to restrain Hizbullah and help restore calm in south Lebanon.

Syrian Vice President Abdel Halim Khadam was quoted in Lebanese newspapers yesterday as saying that the "resistance has the right to fight the occupation."

"This is a Lebanese group which is fighting to liberate its national territory. It is not fighting in Israel. It is fighting the Israelis on Lebanese soil," he said.

Similar comments were made by Syria's ambassador to the US Walid Mualem who was also quoted in the Lebanese press yesterday.

He said maintained that there was no linkage between resistance operations in south Lebanon and the possible resumption of peace talks between Israel and Syria.

"As long as Israel's occupation [of the security zone] goes on the resistance will continue. It's a legitimate reaction. If Israel is so worried about Hizbullah's actions the answer is simple - a fair and comprehensive peace which will follow Israeli withdrawals from south Lebanon and the Golan Heights," Mualem was quoted as saying.

Meanwhile, former Hizbullah secretary-general Soubhi Toufelli was quoted in the Ad-Diyar Lebanese daily as saying that missing IAF navigator Ron Arab might be dead. Toufelli said Arab was not being held by Hizbullah nor Iran. "We have no precise information about his fate of the plane he is being held, or if he is alive. If you want my personal opinion, I would probably say that this pilot is dead," he was quoted as saying.

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MISHTANIM LEADING 100 TASE ISSUES

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INTERNATIONAL SHARES

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NEW YORK

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TASE ROUNDUP

Stock indexes sank yesterday after Jacob Frenkel voiced disappointment with January's budget deficit and called for budgetary restraint.

The nation's biggest companies, including Koor Industries Ltd., Israel's largest industrial concern, and state-controlled phone company Bezeq Ltd. led losses. Koor fell

1.57% to 253.66, down 0.93% from 261.24. The Maof Index retreated from Monday's all-time high, it remained above its previous record high of 258.37 on January 16, 1994.

In early trading, the index had gained as much as 2.37%. In early trading, the index had gained as much as 2.37%.

Share indexes recovered in late trading from mid-afternoon lows of declines more than 3%.

(Bloomberg)

Stocks dip lower

Maof 261.24 ▼ 1.65%

By FELICE MARANZ

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Share indexes recovered in late trading from mid-afternoon lows of declines more than 3%.

(Bloomberg)

WORLD MARKET ROUNDUP

London tried to cling on to its early gains, but a lower Wall Street - the Dow Jones industrial average was down 21.71 at 6,783.46 as Europe closed - took its toll.

The FTSE-100 index had slipped from morning highs to close up a scant 3.1 points at 4,260.9.

"It's very dull. People want to get the FOMC out of the way before doing anything," one market maker said. "It would be a nasty shock if the Fed put up rates this week."

But three years ago to the day, the Fed delivered just such a nasty shock, raising interest rates just when the market least expected them.

Stock prices plunged around the globe in response and this time nobody wants to get caught out.

In London, investors have their own worries as British monetary authorities are scheduled to hold a regular meeting today.

Economists expect Finance Minister Kenneth Clarke to continue resisting a rate-rise so close to the election, which must be held by the end of May.

WHERE TO GO

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Emergency First Aid, 1201, also: Jerusalem 581-0303, Tel Aviv 548-1111 (children/youth 696-1113), Haifa 867-22223, Beer-Sheva 649-4333, Netanya 862-9110, Karmiel 696-5770, Nazeret 757-4555, Hadera 634-6789.

Wfzo hotlines for battered women 02-651-4111, 03-546-1133 (also in Russian), 07-637-6310, 08-855-0506 (also in Amharic).

Rappi Crisis Center (24 hours), Tel Aviv 523-4819, 544-9191 (man), Jerusalem 625-5558, Haifa 853-0533, Eilat 633-1877.

Hadassah Medical Organization - Israel Cancer Association support ser-

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DC LLAR CROSSRATES (US)

Table with columns: Last, Change. Lists dollar crossrates.

US COMMODITIES

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LONDON COMMODITIES

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SPOT METAL METALS (US)

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NEW YORK METAL FUTURES

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LONDON METAL FUTURES

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DATA COMMUNICATIONS VIA ABA

Foreign financial data courtesy of Commstock Trading Ltd.

LONDON

Table with columns: Last, Change. Lists London stock market data.

PARIS

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FRANKFURT

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BERLIN

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VIENNA

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ZURICH

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STOCKHOLM

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COPENHAGEN

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OSLO

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HELSINKI

Table with columns: Last, Change. Lists Helsinki stock market data.

Bar-On Affair

Meridor gives evidence

By RAINE NARCUS

Finance Minister Dan Meridor, an unexpected party in the Bar-On-for-Hebron affair, gave evidence at National Police Headquarters yesterday. A week prior to Bar-On's proposed appointment as Attorney General, Meridor abstained in a Knesset vote for him. Meridor insisted on giving evidence at the National Police Headquarters. Sources said that he is not suspected of any wrongdoing.

"Everyone knew I objected to the Bar-On appointment," said Meridor, who gave evidence for around four hours. Police said he will not be summoned again.

Now, said sources, other ministers who abstained from voting, or objected to the Bar-On appointment may also be summoned to give evidence in an attempt to get to the truth. Amongst those who did not support Bar-On's appointment are Communications Minister Limor Livnat, Foreign

Minister David Levy and former science minister Benny Begin.

Around the same time yesterday, Justice Minister Tzahi Hanegbi also gave evidence at the Justice Ministry, Hanegbi, according to the TV Channel 1 allegations, also knew of the deal, but he denied allegations yesterday. He said he cooperated with police, answered all questions and even gave investigators documents. He denied knowledge of a deal between Deri, Prime Minister Office director-general Avigdor Lieberman and others.

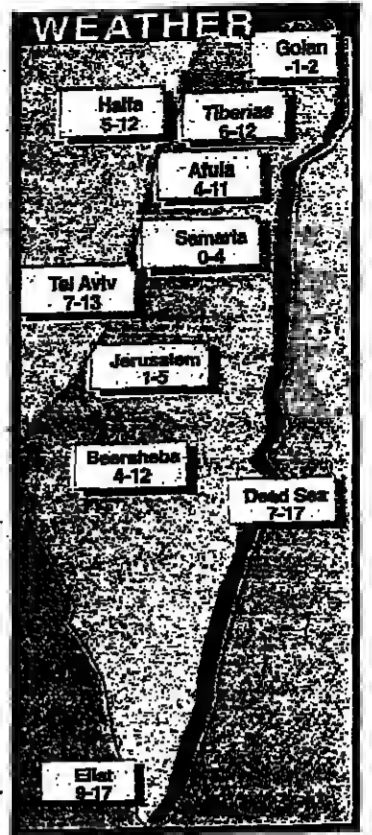
However, two characters considered key witnesses in the alleged deal also gave evidence in the National Fraud Squad's Jaffa headquarters yesterday. MK Aryeh Deri and Deri's close friend David Appel were both summoned for questioning. Deri refused to talk to reporters. Appel, who is suing Channel 1 in a NIS 5 million slander suit, said he forwarded all relevant details to police but denied any part in the alleged deal.



Snow covers Golan, high peaks

The country continued to shiver in the grip of an icy winter blast yesterday as snow closed many roads on the Golan and also fell on peaks in Galilee including Mt. Meron and Safed. IDF snow ploughs and heavy vehicles were kept busy throughout the day trying to keep the roads passable, although driving conditions were made even more treacherous because of thick fog and strong winds. The road from Majdal Shams to the Mt. Hermon ski site (see photo) remained blocked throughout the day, keeping the site itself closed to visitors. By yesterday, the snow on the peak had reached a depth of over one meter. Staff said the site would open for visitors and skiers as soon as the weather cleared. Jerusalem municipality put gritting lorries on standby to clear roads in case of snow in the capital. Elsewhere, heavy rain, which turned to hail at times, caused flooding on many roads, particularly in the north. As night fell, heavy snow was reported on the Golan and Galilee peaks. Snow was reported around Kibbutz Manara and even in Metulla, north of Kiryat Shmona.

(Text: David Rodger; Photo: Avraham Shepina, Israel Sun)



AROUND THE WORLD

	Low	High	Wind	Cloud
Buenos Aires	18	27	25	77
Calcutta	24	32	15	63
Chicago	04	28	08	39
Copenhagen	05	29	08	39
Frankfurt	05	27	08	39
Geneva	01	24	04	39
Helsinki	04	25	04	39
Hong Kong	15	28	18	81
Jo'burg	18	27	27	64
London	12	24	19	64
Los Angeles	01	24	09	46
Madrid	05	21	14	57
Moscow	02	28	12	54
Munich	01	21	14	57
New York	03	27	08	46
Paris	02	28	12	54
Rome	04	28	12	54
Sydney	16	24	23	73
Tokyo	02	22	01	54
Yokohama	02	22	01	54
Zurich	01	21	08	56

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Winning cards and numbers

In yesterday's daily Chance drawing, the winning cards were the seven of spades, the eight of hearts, the nine of diamonds and the ace of clubs.

In last night's weekly Lotto drawing, the winning numbers were 12, 14, 19, 28, 30 and 40 and the additional number was 1.

Albright's parents were Jews - report

By HILLEL KUTTLER

WASHINGTON - Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, it seems, may be a trailblazer not only as the first woman to occupy the position but also as the first Jewish woman.

Three of Albright's grandparents and more than a dozen of her relatives were Jews who were killed during the Holocaust in Auschwitz or died of diseases at Theresienstadt, according to yesterday's *Washington Post*.

The newspaper reached these findings while conducting research for a profile of the new secretary that is to appear in this Sunday's magazine.

Albright's parents, Josef and Mandula Korbel, hid their Jewishness from their children and only in recent years has Albright begun looking into her past, the paper said.

Albright told a reporter last week that "the only thing I have to go by is what my mother and father told me," which is that family members simply died "during" World War II.

The material was culled from documents in German, Czech and Jewish archives, as well as

Auschwitz transport lists and interviews the paper conducted with the Korbels' family and friends in the former Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia.

"I have always thought of myself as a Czechoslovak Catholic. My parents were of the generation who thought they were the children of a free Czechoslovakia, the only democracy in central Europe. That was their pride [and] that is what I grew up with," she said.

"Those who knew the family in Europe began writing to Albright soon after the collapse of Communism in 1989, providing tales of her hidden history, along with 'the occasional letter which would say something about the fact that my family was of Jewish origin,'" she added.

Josef Korbel was a Czech diplomat who removed his family from Czechoslovakia soon after the Nazi invasion in 1939 and settled in England. The family returned after the war, but following the Communist takeover, fled to the US.

Albright was raised a Catholic and is now an Episcopalian.

Henry Kissinger is the only secretary of state who was Jewish.

Woman killed in automobile accident

Gazla Ali Hujirat, 35, of Kafr Bir al-Maksur, was killed and the driver was lightly injured when their car veered into oncoming traffic on the Nazareth-Shifaram road yesterday afternoon and crashed head-on into a bus. Two weeks ago, two people were killed and one person was seriously injured in an accident near the same spot. (Itim)

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Handwritten text in Arabic script: "معلومات إضافية"